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Focused on Local News

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Time to pay attention

Do you want Genesis Health Care to continue running the nursing home at Sullivan County Health Care? Would you like the chance to vote on a constitutional amendment to remove the courts from jurisdiction on education funding in New Hampshire? How should New Hampshire repair its parks system and should the lease at Mt. Sunapee include expansion of the ski area.

Are you happy with the changes in health care in Vermont passed last year? Did they go far enough or too far? Do you want an end to Act 60 and 68?

Should the United States leave Iraq immediately or stay as long as necessary? What about tax cuts, the national minimum wage and policies affecting our nation's war on terror?

Just in case you have not been paying attention, and we know many are not, the 2006 congressional midterm elections are shaping up as the most historic since the Republicans became the majority in Congress in 1994. But the issues facing voters at the state and local level also warrant our close scrutiny.

There have always been plenty of reasons to be cynical and turned off by our political process. Many citizens justifiably feel a complete disconnect between their daily lives and that of those inside the Beltway or in state capitols. The result is the feeling that their vote doesn't make any difference.

But clearly, those elected in November could have a huge impact on the issues stated above and that does affect everyone.

With just weeks to go before the Nov. 7 election, incumbents and challengers are scurrying here and there trying to persuade voters that they will represent their interests better than their opponent. This is the time, pundits say, that those all-important swing voters start to take notice and make up their minds on who they'll vote for.

Because of advances in technology, information, good and bad, on the candidates is more easily accessible and in an unfiltered and unedited form. That helps voters gain a better understanding of the issues. Locally, candidates for the New Hampshire House and Sullivan County Commissioners have been making their opinions heard on questions about education funding and the nursing home contract with Genesis. The latter will certainly be a source of strong debate next year.

Again, we urge all voters to take some time, learn about the candidates and make an informed choice on Nov. 7. Otherwise, you cannot complain when you don't like what they do.